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### Public Opinion in Germany on the Papacy and the Hierarchy During the Fourteenth Century and the Early Conciliar Period

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**Public Opinion in Germany on the Papacy and the Hierarchy**

**During the Fourteenth Century and the Early**

**Conciliar Period**

**R. Nordsieck**

**May, 1929.**



**Public Opinion in Germany on the Papacy and the Hierarchy  
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Conciliar Period.**

**I. Public Opinion.**

A thorough understanding of public opinion on the medieval ecclesiastical system is of great importance for the proper interpretation of the events leading up to the Reformation. The necessity of this becomes more apparent when we consider the vital position of the Church in the medieval system and the direct and immediate bearing it had on the daily pursuits, welfare, and happiness of the peoples of Western Europe not only as members of the Church, the Alleinseligmachende, but also as subjects of actual or, at least, theoretical feudal fiefs of the Apostolic See. By the end of the thirteenth century the Church had penetrated the lower levels of the people (1). In order to accommodate itself to this new condition, it should have discarded its hitherto exclusively aristocratic character and progressively assumed a more democratic constitution. But this is precisely what it failed to do. And it is to this failure that we may ascribe many of the vicissitudes of the Church during the two centuries preceding the Reformation. When we look upon these facts in the light of the democratic and nationalistic tendencies of the times as they are exemplified in the growing influence of the burghers and the towns, we can readily perceive why we must attach so much importance to the trend of opinion expressed by or for the masses. The more so because they were directly affected by the problems of their age and at the same time played an increasingly weighty role in their solution.

In one sense the people of the Middle Ages were spectators who

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(1) Lamprecht IV, 392).



recorded the reactions caused by the unfolding of the interminable and complicated historical drama before their eyes. Popular opinion from this point of view has been well defined by a German scholar:

"Die oeffentliche Meinung laesst sich mit dem Chor in der antiken Tragödie vergleichen, welcher die Handlungen und Leiden der dramatischen Personen beobachtet und ausspricht was das Gemeinbewusstsein empfindet und urtheilt. Sie ist im grossen, was der Wahrspruch der Geschworenen im Strafverfahren bedeutet." (2).

The chronicles are especially representative of this type of public opinion.

From another point of view, however, the people of the Middle Ages were far from mere spectators. On the contrary they were forced to bear the brunt of all the evil resulting from the decline of the Church and especially the corruption of the hierarchy and the papacy. Then, too, they were more and more inclined to forego the role of passive participants and to attempt solutions of their own.

Popular opinion, in the latter sense perhaps more so than in the first, was responsible for the satire and invective which the authors of especially the folksongs hurl against the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy. This satire is -- almost paradoxically -- some of the best source material that we can obtain. It is to be trusted far more than the official documents of the times. Behind this satire one usually finds a keen, observant, and critical mind. As Trevelyan remarks:

"It is almost impossible to get much idea of the actual influence of an institution from official documents, for they only represent what the institution is meant to be and not what it is." (3)

In reference to satire he quotes Mark Pattison to this effect:

(2) Deut. Staatswoerterbuch, Bluntschli and Krater, Leipzig-Stuttgart, 1882. Treatise of Bluntschli on "Oeffentliche Meinung." p. 348.

Cited by Kopelke, p. 11.

(3) Trevelyan: England in the Age of Wycliffe, p.105, note.



"Satire to be popular must exaggerate, but it must be an exaggeration of known and recognized facts. — Satire does not create the sentiment to which it appeals." (4).

The satirists, as Pattison remarked were "not indiscriminate" in their attacks on the Church. (5). Most of them were of a discriminating nature, picking out the flaws in the existing system and then driving home their point relentlessly. Most of them, indeed, spoke from personal experience. The corruption of the Church and the clergy was one of the major factors in the daily life of these people. Their criticism, at least the greater part of it, rested on personal experience and not on mere rumor. If, then, we can establish a fairly representative consensus of opinion, we can be safe in assuming a large kernel of underlying truth. The more so, when we find similar traits in the chronicles of the times, in which the satiric vein is not so prominent.

But apart from the questions of truth and exaggeration, <sup>popular</sup> popular opinion, unfounded as it may often be, is by no means a negligible factor in movements such as these, especially since the people tried, and in some measure succeeded, in playing a significant role; witness the large number of laymen attending the Council of <sup>Constance</sup> Constance.

Our task may, then, be defined as the determination of a fairly representative consensus of popular opinion on the events movements, and conditions in the Church of that time. Various exigencies have forced us to limit our scrutiny to the German <sup>speaking</sup> speaking peoples for the most part during the fourteenth century and the early part of the fifteenth. We will dwell on earlier <sup>manifestations</sup> manifestations merely for the purposes of orientation, with the intention of indicating at least some few points of contact with past thought along these line.

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(4) Pattison, Essays, II, p. 104 — Nettleship's Edition; "Popular View of the Clergy." In Trevelyan, p. 108 note.



## II. The Sources.

In order to determine the popular opinion on these topics, we must first ascertain what portion of the literature of the age in question reproduces the public mind most faithfully.

The great mass of material in the chronicles, clerical and lay, attracts our attention first. They are all the more <sup>important</sup> since the period is characterized by the rise of the middle <sup>classes</sup> classes. After the fall of the Hohenstaufen the cities of Germany, <sup>stimulated</sup> by the crusades and the increasing commerce of an age that was gradually losing its "natural-economic" character (naturalwirtschaftlicher Charakter) and assuming one based on "money-economy" (Geldwirtschaft), appeared more and more frequently upon the scenes, political and martial. As early as 1254 the middle classes gave evidence of quite a little political independence in the founding of the Rhenish League (6). It was especially in Swabia that the evolution of mere rural villages into free imperial cities was noticeable. During the fourteenth century the German free cities acquired political autonomy (7). As a German historian puts it:

"Das selbsttändige Auftreten und der politische Einfluss des deut. Buergetums unterscheidet diese Periode ebenso bestimmt von der vorgehenden, einer ganz ueberwiegend baeuerlich; kriegerischen Kultur, wie von der folgenden, der vorherrschenden Bildung der fuerstlichen Hoefe." (8).

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(5) Pattison, Essays, p.105. Quoted in Trevelyan, p. 106, note.

(6) Theremin, p.5.

(7) Theremin, pp. 5 and 6. Lamprecht pp. 175-200; especially 200-210.

(8) Hitzsch, Ges. des. deut. Volkes, 1885. III, p. 143. In Theremin, p. 5.



It was natural, then, that the middle class should seek and acquire leadership in the field of historical writing. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the chronicles were written almost exclusively in Latin and, therefore, by the clerics. In the fourteenth century the clerics were losing their monopoly in this kind of writing. The burghers naturally wrote their chronicles in the language of the people. The fact that the Franciscans were already preaching in German and in the other vernaculars, no doubt, influenced them quite a bit in this matter. Another result of this change was the abandonment to a great extent of the poetic form with which the clerics had frequently invested their works. Of course, the clerics did not abandon their activity along these <sup>lines</sup> entirely. It is significant, however, to note that most of them succumbed to the Zeitgeist and wrote as burghers for burghers.

On matters beyond their immediate experience the authors of these chronicles are very unreliable. The origins of their respective cloisters or towns are often veiled in fantastic myths in order to arouse the civic pride and patriotism of their readers — an occurrence somewhat analagous to Virgil's genealogy of the Julian family. But they are fairly reliable when writing on contemporary events. Furthermore, these writers wrote for their public. It is for this reason that we can use their works as gages of public opinion. They were one of the chief means of disseminating information and airing controversies. In this they occupied a position in medieval life not entirely unlike that of the newspaper of later days. (9).

But the ruling opinions of the people are to be found in the

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(9) For discussion of the chronicles of. Kopelke, p. 13 ff.



folksongs. The fourteenth century witnessed the decline of the Minnesang and the Kunstlyrik and its transformation into the set, stilted, and artificial Meistersang. Simultaneously the Volkslied blossomed forth. In fact one can find dim yet unmistakable traces of the future folksong in the literature of the previous centuries. The works of Walther von der Vogelweide and of the clerical Vasantes evidence many traits that were to come to full bloom in the folksong as yet unborn.

The folksongs are perhaps a better counterpart to the modern newspaper than the chronicles. The chronicles are often satisfied with the mere stating of facts and portraying of events. The folksongs go further. In the historical folksongs especially do the opinions and judgments of the writers come to their fullest expression. For this reason they often border upon bitter and ruthless denunciation, upon violent satire and invective, for they sprang almost full-born from the maelstrom of contemporary politics, both in war and in peace. Their authors were often active participants in occurrences which they depict. Their works were widely spread among the people, transmitted by word of mouth and later by manuscript for generations.

Applied to a good many of these works the term Volkslied is sometimes a misnomer. Many are prosaic, with little swing or rhythm -- merely versified prose. Yet, whatever their purely literary value, their contents are of the utmost importance to the student of history and Kulturschichte. (10)

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(10) For discussion of the history and the literary problems on the folksongs cf. Golther, pp. 351 f. and 452 f.



### III. General Survey of Religious and Ecclesiastical Conditions.

In order to evaluate popular opinion on the papacy and the hierarchy, a brief review of the main currents in the history of the medieval Church will be of no little advantage.

The age of Innocent III (1198-1216) is commonly accepted as the climax of papal power and influence in the Middle Ages. The struggle between the Church and the Empire ended with the overthrow of the Hohenstaufen during the first half of the thirteenth century. In the eleventh century the papacy had changed its <sup>policy</sup> from world-abnegation to world supremacy. But it was not until the thirteenth century that the aspirations of the Apostolic See were actually realized. Its affluent and influential position <sup>naturally</sup> caused the centralization and perfection of its entire organization. <sup>It</sup> became, in fact as well as in theory, caput et lux mundi.

The fullest expressions of Rome's claims to temporal and spiritual sovereignty are to be found in Innocent IV's "Commentary on the Decretals" (1243-54) and in the Bull Unam Sanctam promulgated by Boniface VIII in 1302 (11).

The rise of the middle classes, described above, was the one tendency to which the ecclesiastical organism could or would not accommodate itself. The whole system was effectively bound to Rome, the one and only source of grace. It responded neither to the nationalistic tendencies of the times nor to the democratic. This incompatibility contributed to a large extent to the subsequent decline of the Church. This decline of the papacy was most evident <sup>-4-</sup> along financial lines. During the thirteenth century the papal income decreased almost completely (12).

(11) For the Bull Unam Sanctam cf. Wirbt, p. 210.

(12) Lamprecht p. 398.



This was due greatly to the change in the medieval economic system from one based on "natural economy" to one based on "money economy." Up to the thirteenth century the various institutions of the Church were rich in land and its accompanying products. The economic change caused an alarming deflation in their resources. They were thus forced to seek new sources of income, such as the exposition of relics and the breaking up of their landed property into benefices. Another result was the breakdown of the communal life in the monasteries. The income of their landed property was now <sup>split</sup> up into ecclesiastical stipends and benefices, many of which were often concentrated in a single person. This not only denied the purpose of the monastic orders, but also aided in breaking down the morals of their members. Common parishes were also regarded as benefices with similar results for the secular clergy. The heaping of such benefices, or the holding of pluralities, often had serious effects on their administration. Absentee holders often employed vicars at starvation wages and as a consequence the whole system suffered. (13).

Then, too, the papal court was forced to expend huge sums to maintain prestige and dignity in keeping with its new position in world politics. To meet these new expenses and in order to <sup>make</sup> compensate itself for losses sustained in the recent economic revolution the papacy levied new and increasingly burdensome assessments on both clergy and laity. It is for this reason that the papacy during the fourteenth century tried to gain a fuller control over ecclesiastical appointments than it had hitherto enjoyed. As early as the Lateran Council of 1159 Innocent II had applied the feudal system to the Roman hierarchy (14).

(13) Lamprecht, p. 393 ff.

(14) Lan, p. 8.



For a century already the popes had declared certain benefices vacantes and Sedem Apostolicam. John XXII (1313-34) formulated rules for the disposal of such benefices. During his regime all sees which were left vacant because of an invalidated election <sup>were</sup> "reserved". Under John's successors this system of reservations was extended until it included benefices of all kinds throughout <sup>Western</sup> Europe. To John XXII must also be credited the organization of the <sup>the</sup> machinery whereby funds for the support of the papacy were <sup>collected</sup> collected. He was the first to make the dispensation of grace, temporal and eternal, a source of revenue. (15), while Boniface IX (1388-1404) first capitalized ecclesiastical patronage by selling <sup>offices</sup> offices to the highest bidder (16). It may be profitable to recapitulate briefly the various fees and exactions whereby the Papacy sought to balance its accounts:

1. The tithe was levelled for specific purposes and amounted to one tenth of all ecclesiastical incomes. In actual practice it became almost continuous.
2. The annates were demanded of appointees to office since the beginning of the twelfth century. At first they were used for local purposes only. From the beginning of the thirteenth century the prelates and the princes were allowed to collect them. John XXII was the first to appropriate for primarily papal purposes. Bishops were assessed various sums for confirmation in office and archbishops had to pay large sums for the bestowal of the pallium.
3. Procurations: Deacons and bishops were allowed to exact whatever sums they needed when on visitation in their diocese. The popes often claimed a certain percentage and sometimes absorbed <sup>the</sup> the whole sum.

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(15) Lindsay, p. 8 f.  
 (16) Lindsay, p. 16.



4. Medii fructus: the income from vacant benefices which was first claimed by John XXII.
  5. In times of special need subsidies were demanded of all ecclesiastical institutions.
  6. Fees for special dispensations in matters involving sins <sup>against</sup> canon or moral law such as marriages in forbidden degrees of holding of pluralities.
  7. Legal fees: Since the Roman curia was the highest court of <sup>appeal</sup> in Christendom it charged proportionately. (17).
- To these fees must be added the bribes exacted by an avaricious bureaucracy.

Although these fees were usually exacted from the clergy, the laity was beginning more and more to bear the brunt of the papal financial policy. This was made possible by the complete monopoly of the clergy on the various quasi-religious, quasi-legal acts to which every individual in the Middle Ages was forced to submit.

Concomitant with the transformation of the papacy into a world power and a financial institution we find an increasing moral corruption of the clergy. Under the conditions we are not surprised to see the popes and the other higher officials distribute offices and positions on the basis of mere financial considerations to the exclusion of any criterions of moral fitness. The secular princes dealt in a like manner -- when they had the power to do so. We are still less surprised to see unscrupulous men, not fit for holding office, both morally and otherwise, amassing sizeable fortunes under the guise of serving the Church. Extortion and simony were common. Nepotism in various degrees was openly practiced. Celibacy, which had come to be recognized throughout the Church, often replaced a



wife by a concubine. Inefficient administration, pride, arrogance, and luxurious living followed close in the wake of financial corruption. Because of the transfer of the papacy's spiritual supremacy into secular fields, these offenses were seldom punished. The clergy was amenable only to the ecclesiastical tribunals, but these were also corrupt. Hence prosecution became so difficult that offences were only infrequently punished. Gregory VII (1073-85) and Innocent III (1198-1216) tried to suppress simony and <sup>other</sup> vices but had small success. (18).

Naturally the monastic orders succumbed to the same <sup>influences</sup>. In addition they often obtained exemption from episcopal jurisdiction, <sup>- then</sup> which freed them from even that modicum of restraint which the hierarchy was still able to exercise. It was very common for monks <sup>monks</sup> to take vows for selfish reasons, as for instance, to escape punishment for crime. Lea claims that the orders were for the most part sources of evil. (19).

Besides the general ecclesiastical movements the papacy was pressed from still other angles. The Babylonian Captivity (1309-1378) delivered the pope into the hands of the French king. In addition, to forcing the papal curia to shoulder the added <sup>- and</sup> financial burden of the growing French kingdom it also tended to bring the popes into opposition with the evolving national feelings of the other European nations.

The German burghers had opposed the papacy since about 1335. In 1358 they joined forces with the princes and the knights in establishing the Kurverein at Rhense, which was decidedly anti-papal, over the opposition of a vacillating emperor. This action was confirmed by the Golden Bull of 1353. (20).

(18) Lea, p. 7 f.

(19) Lea, p. 35.

(20) Lamprecht, pp. 101 ff., 398.



The only hope for reformation was the election of a pope with both ability and ideals. But unfortunately, the peculiar constitution of the curia prevented this. Since the middle of the eleventh century the right of electing the pope had been vested in the cardinals. During the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries the French and Italian cardinals opposed each other quite consistently. This finally resulted in the Great Schism (1378-1415). This <sup>culminated</sup> capped the climax. Two popes and two curias preyed upon each other and the Church together with the laity was ground between the upper and lower millstones. Church finance became robbery. The Church, and the religious life of the laity with it, declined. Excommunication and Interdict were used promiscuously, so much so that their use became quite ineffective. On the whole, reformation of the Church became a crying necessity. (21).

Various attempts at reform were signal failures. The ideas of Marsilius of Padua that the Church Universal was superior to ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> pope were rapidly absorbed and gained general circulation. The practical outcome of such movements was the Council of Pisa (1409), which solved the schism by making it threefold! It did, however, point the way to possible solution: the gathering of the whole medieval Church at the call of the college of cardinals. This implied the substitution of the episcopal constitution of the third to the eighth centuries for the papal system of the thirteenth and the fourteenth. Dietrich of Niem, a Westphalian, went further. He inspired the ideas concerning a general council with the principles enunciated by Marsilius. In his opinion the clergy were no longer the only foundation for a council. The laity <sup>the</sup> was to take the initiative and thus <sup>to</sup> end the schism. (22)

Following this idea out, the logical result was the increase of

(21) Lamprecht, 399 ff.  
(22) Lamprecht, 401 f.



prestige and authority of the emperor. Sigismund seized the opportunity and it is to him that we must to a great extent credit whatever good was accomplished at Constance. (23).

The history of the Council of Constance need not be treated at length. It will be sufficient to point out its one great error — one that successfully retarded the Reformation for a century. Having successfully disposed of the schism, the council elected Martin V on Nov. 11, 1417, before they had carried out the proposed reformation of the Church in its head and members. <sup>through</sup> Now thoroughly the reformation was estopped may be seen from Lamprecht's summary:

"Was war erreicht? Manches was den Zeitgenossen bedeutend erschien; nichts was zu einer wahren und tiefen Reform der Kircheverfassung haette fuehren koennen. Auch wurden selbst die Konkordate wiederum ausser der Englischen kaum ausgefuehrt." (24).

"Papst Martin V. aber zog am 18 Mai 1418 mit grossen Pompe von Konstanz ab; nicht mehr gebunden an die Fesseln des Konzils, gedachte er Rom und die alte Suprematie der Statthalter Christi von neuem zu gewinnen. Im Jahre 1430 ritt er in Rom ein; die konsiliare Bewegung galt ihm als Unrecht; soweit sie noch bestand, suchte er sie zu <sup>erstickten</sup> ~~erstickten~~." (25).

In judging the Church in general during these times perhaps the verdict of Bernard of Clairvaux will be of some value. Although he lived fully a century and a half before the time we are discussing the same conditions prevailed, although to a different degree:

"Whom can you show me among the prelates who does not seek rather to empty the pockets of his flock than to subdue their vices." (26).

Lea testifies to the universality of such opinions:

"Such as I have depicted the Church it appeared to all the men of the time who had the clearest insight and the loftiest aspirations; and its repulsiveness must be understood by those who would understand the movements that agitated Christendom." (27)

(23) Lamprecht, 402.

(24) Lamprecht, 409.

(25) Lamprecht, 410.

(26) Bernard of Clairvaux, De Consideratione Lib. III, Cap. 4, 5. Cited by Lea, 52.

(27) Lea, pp. 51 and 52.



#### IV. Previous Criticism of Hierarchy and Papacy in Germany.

Before proceeding to the discussion of popular opinion on the papacy and the hierarchy during the fourteenth century and the early Conciliar Period we will briefly inspect previous opinion on these same topics.

Among the German authors of the early thirteenth century <sup>Walther</sup> Walther von der Vogelweide is perhaps the most outstanding opponent of the papal aggression. After the death of Henry VI (1197) his brother Philip of Swabia and Otto of Poitou both contended for the German crown. When Innocent II observed the Otto's party, die Pfaffen as Walther calls it, was about to be conquered by Philip's, die Leien, he declared for Otto and placed Philip's party under the bann. Walther laments this miscarriage of justice in these words:

"Ich hoert in Rom mit Luegen  
Zwei Koenige betruengen (Philip and his nephew Frederick)  
Daraus entstand der groesste Zwist.

.....  
Ab legten sie (the clergy) das Schwert sodann  
Und wiederum die Stole an.  
Und bannten wen sie wollten  
Doch nur nicht wen sie sollten.  
Manch Gotteshaus ward da zerstuoert. (28).

After Philip's death (1208) Otto obtained full recognition as emperor. Even Walther supported him, especially when Innocent III put him under the bann because he tried to gain supremacy over the Papal States and Sicily. Walther's complaints are well set forth in the following:

"Der Stuhl zu Rom ist endlich so wohl versehen,  
Wie es einst durch jenen Zaub'rer Gerbert ist geschehen.  
Der hat die Hoelle freilich nur sich selbst geweiht; <sup>kur</sup>  
Doch dieser giebt zum Fall sich ihr mit all der Christenheit,  
Was ruft nicht alle Welt zum Himmel laut um Strafen  
Und fraget Gott wie lang' er wolle schlafen?  
Sie wirken seinem Werk entgegen, faelschen ihm sein Wort,  
Sein eig'ner 'Knecht' stiehlt ihm seinen Himmelsort,  
Sein 'Mittler' raubet hier und mordet dort, <sup>(21)</sup>  
Sein 'Hirte' ward zu einem Wolf ihm unter seinen Schafen." (29)

{28} Obermann, 95 and 96 and notes; Colther 358 f.

{29} Obermann, 97 and notes.



In this poem Walther compares Innocent III with Gerbert (Pope Sylvester II), notorious in the Middle Ages for his alleged sorcery. — a comparison not at all favorable to Innocent. He furthermore accuses the pope of setting a bad example:

"Gieret er (the pope), sei gierent mit ihm alle,  
Lueget er, sie luegen mit ihm alle  
Und trueget er, sie truegen mit ihm seinen Trug.  
So klingt (man kann mir's tadeln nicht mit Fug)  
Des neu'n wie alten Judas Name nun mit uebelen Schalle."  
(30).

And furthermore:

"Seht nur, wie jetzt der P faffen Werk, wie ihre Lehre <sup>sei!</sup> sei!  
Sonst waren ihre Lehren wie die W erke reine;  
D och jetzt steht beides so nur im Vereine.  
W ir hoeren Unrecht sagen nur, sehen Unrecht tun allein,  
Die uns guter Lehre V orbild sollten sein." (31).

In "Der Opferstock" the pope is blamed for causing the devastation of the German kingdom through his advocacy of Frederick II's candidacy against Otto. Germany is laid waste, while the Pfaffen grow wealthy and fat:

"Ahi wie kristenliche nu der babest lachet,  
swenne er seinen W alden seit 'ich hanz also gemacht'  
(daz er da seit, des solte er niemer han gedaht)  
" ergiht, ich han zwen Alman under eine krone braht,  
daz siz riche eulen stoeren unde wasten.  
ie dar under fuellen wir die kasten;  
Ich hane an minen stoc gement, ir guot ist alles min;  
ir tiuschez silber vert in minen welschen schrin.  
ir pfaffen, ezzent hœner und trinkent win,  
unde lat die tiutschen ..... vasten!" (32).

Papal extortion is treated quite satirically in another poem.

The pope had just made new levies on the German ostensibly for the crusades, but in Walther's opinion merely to fill his own coffers, for "den grossen Schatz teilt selten aus der Pfaffen Hande" (33).

So we see that Walther was steadfastly opposed to the encroachments of the papacy upon the domain of the secular princes and the manifestations of what he regarded as the financial corruption of the pope and the clergy. To be sure, Walther's works do not mirror the popular mind as the later folksongs do, but we are safe in asserting that his political poems enjoyed widespread influence and clarifies the issues of his time for many, especially among the upper classes. (34).

(30) Obermann, 97. (31) Obermann, 98. (32) Hirbt, 184. <sup>77?</sup>  
(34) For Walther's works cf. Golther, 354 ff.; for his political works, Golther, 359 ff.



In the very same year that Walther's activity ceased, Reinmar von Zweter (born ca. 1200) continued his work. Gregory IX had pronounced the bann on Frederick II because he delayed in starting<sup>upon</sup> his promised crusade. In fact when Frederick did carry out his plans, Gregory did everything he could to hinder him, even to the extent of using force (35). Reinmar thereupon attacks the cardinals for electing such a pope:

"Die weder Engel, noch Engelskind,  
Dabei gehässig, neidisch und hochmuetig sind,  
Wie koeennten sie zu Gottes ehren einen rechten Papst  
erwählen?" (36).

In another poem (37) he contrasts the poverty of Christ with the opulence of the popes. On another occasion Reinmar condemned the promiscuous use of the bann, as follows:

"Wer in der Stole Fluch und Bann verhängenget,  
Und wer da unterm Helme raubt und senget,  
Der will mit beiden Schwertern streiten.  
Will man's in Gottes Namen tun,  
Muss sich Sankt Petrus schaemen nun,  
Dass er nicht solches tat zu seinen Zeiten." (38).

The whole Church he finds so corrupt and sinful that he regards it ready for the Anti-Christ:

"Komm, Entdecktist, du Tor und Gauch!  
Die Priester samt der Kirche auch,  
Sie samt dem roem'schen Reich find'st du als Feile! (39)(40)

Similar thoughts are expressed by Freidank in his "Bescheidenheit" (ca. 1225). He attacks especially the indulgences and the avarice of the papacy:

"Suende nieman mac vergeben  
wan got allein: dar sule streben.  
Diu gnade sin esel wol gezint,  
daz er ein ohsen suende nimt.  
Der ablaz duenket toren guot,  
den ein gouch dem andern tuot;" (41) and

Daz netze kan ze Rome nie,  
da mite sant Peter vische vie;  
daz netze im nu versuohet.

(35) Obermann, 140, note. (36) Obermann, 140. (37) Obermann, 141.  
(38) Obermann, 142. (39) Obermann, 142. (40) For Reinmar's work  
cf. Golther, 377 ff. and for his political writings, cf. Golther, 378.



romesch netze vahet  
golt silber buerge unde lant;  
das was sant Peter unbekannt." (43).

The "Märner," who live about the time of the interregnum, writes from practically the same point of view, censuring priest and pope for exchanging their stola for a sword, with which they fight not for souls but for gold:

"Die Stolen wurden nun zum Schwert  
Sie fechten nicht um Seelen, nein, nach Golde." (43)

The strivings and ambitions of the papacy may be summed up according to this author in the words: "Gieb her!" (44).

In addition to these authors, we must, in passing, give some attention to the Garmine Burana, which are commonly dated at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the fourteenth century. The opinions that are expressed in the songs of the vagabond clerics agree substantially with those of Walther and his successors. This agreement is all the more important when we consider that the authors of these Latin lyrics had been or still were connected with the Church in some manner or other whereas Walther and the other Kunstliediker were often attached to the courts of the emperor or other powerful nobles. They were also men of some education and culture. The Garmine must undoubtedly be classed among the finest products of literature in the Middle Ages. They were widely circulated, for the wandering Goliards were to be found throughout Western Europe. Of course, we cannot assume that they came to the attention of the average man, for the very reason that they were mostly written in Latin. But of this we can be sure, that they represent the opinions of men who were in a position to judge. Their opinions combined with

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(41) Freidank, Bescheidenheit, 150, 20 in Mirbt, 184.  
(42) Freidank, Bescheidenheit, 152, 16 in Mirbt, 184.  
(43) Obermann, p. 148  
(44) Obermann, p. 148.



those of Walther, Reinmar, and the "Warner" ought to give us a fairly good idea of the reaction of intelligent observers to the movements within the Church. (45).

Perhaps the best satire in the collection is the one beginning Uter contra vitia carmini rebellis (48). "Roma caecus mundi est, sed nil caecit mundum" -- such is the condition of the Church (47).

Offices and justice are both for sale at the papal curia:

"Nisi det pecuniam,  
Roma totum negat,  
qui plus dat pecuniae,  
melius allegat" (48).  
"Si das, tibi datur." (49).

From the pope to the doorkeeper, all are corrupt:

"Sic papa, sic ianitor,  
sic bullator quærit,  
cardinalis etiam  
grex hanc viam terit." (50).

Ecclesiastical judges are portrayed as devouring those under their care:

"Doctores apostolici  
et iudices katholici  
quidam colunt Albinum  
et diligunt R ufinum,  
cessant iudicare,  
et student devorare  
gregem sibi commissum;  
hi cadunt in abyssum,  
si caecus ducit caecum,  
in fossam cadit secum;  
hi tales subannantur,  
et infra castra cremantur." (51).

The utter worldliness of the bishops is depicted in the following lines:

"Episcopi cornuti  
contendere nati.  
ad prædæ sunt parati,  
et indecenter coronati  
pro virga ferunt lanceam,  
pro insula galeam,  
olipeum pro stola,  
(hæc mortis erit mola,)  
loricam pro alba,  
hæc occasio calva,)

(45) Schmeller, Introduction. Golther, 141 ff.

(46) Schmeller, No. 19, p. 19.

(47) Schmeller, No. 19, v. 4, p. 19.

(48) Schmeller, No. 19, v. 7., p. 19.

(49) Schmeller, No. 19, v. 8, p. 19.



pellem pro humerali  
pro ritu seculari." (52).

The prelates in general:

"Sunt latrones, non latores,  
legis Dei destructores." (53).

The Goliards also complained of the monastic orders:

"Monachi sunt nigri,  
et in regula sunt pigri,  
bene cucullati,  
et male coronati,  
quidam sunt cani  
et sensibus prophani,  
quidam sunt fratres,  
et verentur ut patres,  
dicuntur Norpertini  
et non Augustini,  
in cano vestimento  
novo gaudent invento." (54).

At the very time, then, in which the papal Machtpolitik had gained the ends for which it was striving, we find the growing corruption and the imminent decline of the Church mirrored in the literature of the times. But it is not until the fourteenth <sup>-fifteenth</sup> century that the reaction to ecclesiastical conditions comes to a fuller expression — an expression to which the masses could subscribe <sup>more</sup> more completely than to that of the previous century and a half.

- (50) Schmeller, No. 19, v. 15, p. 20.
- (51) Schmeller, No. 17, v. 6, p. 15.
- (52) Schmeller, No. 17, v. 7, p. 15.
- (53) Schmeller, No. 73, v. 5, p. 43.
- (54) Schmeller, No. 17, v. 10, p. 15.



V. Public Opinion on the Lower Clergy in Germany during the Fourteenth Century and the Early Conciliar Period. <sup>-teenth</sup>

At the beginning of the fourteenth century conditions in the Church were of such a nature that they would evoke strong expression <sup>-ion</sup> of popular opinion. if the people were capable of such expression. The previous status of the people was such that we could hardly expect them to give voice to their opinions. But now we find the burghers and the cities on the ascendant, and, therefore, voicing their thoughts and judgements on all matters of public polity, <sup>including</sup> including the Church.

The lower clergy, the common parish priests and the cathedral chapters, were often despised and disliked by their parishioners, partly because they felt themselves superior to the laymen and claimed <sup>-ed</sup> clerical exemptions from civic law and civil responsibilities and partly because they supported the oppressive policies of many of the bishops and the papal curia.

The cities often tried to emancipate themselves from episcopal jurisdiction and required that the clerics perform the ordinary duties of citizens. This happened several times in Augsburg. "Alle pfaffen, aehte und nonnen mussten buerger werden," (55) if they wished to remain within the confines of the city. If they left in protest, their property was confiscated (56). This action was approved by the Swabian and Rhenish League of Cities (1380-85) (57). These incidents are very significant because they give us some idea as to the general acceptance of such views.

The clergy often used the ban in their quarrels with the cities <sup>after</sup> — so often, in fact, that it lost its effect and for such <sup>insignif</sup> insignificant reasons that it was scorned:

- 
- (55) Augsburg, 70 in Theremin, 40.  
 (56) Augsburg, 70 in Theremin, 40.  
 (57) Augsburg, 73 in Theremin, 40.



oftenum Schulden oder ander klein unpillich und unred-  
lich Sachen." (58).

In the Teufelsnetz the clergy is accused of applying the bann to  
sins which they themselves commit:

"Das die geistlichen verbietet bi dem bann,  
das wend si selber weder tuon noch lan." (59).

As a result, the people seemed to care little for the once terrifying  
results of the bann: and the interdict:

"Ob niemer messe gesungen wurde  
das waer mir gar ein lichte burde  
ich wolde nit einen heller geben  
umb alles sing unde lesen  
des mocht in drisig jaren gewesen  
ze Wuersburg hie in unser stat  
wir essen und trinken dannoch sat  
ungesung unde ungelesen —  
wir wollen unser selbes wesen." (60).

The general corruption of the clergy tended only to heighten the  
feelings of the people. Hugo von Montfort writes:

"Soelt ich mich dann zu den pfaffen ziehen,  
Die habent krieg, unkuesch und git:  
Das ich dir daran nicht liege,  
Du hoerst wol in den landen wit." (61).

The prelates in general, according to the Teufelsnetz "wend irn  
rechten orden nit tragen, der in von got ist ufgesetzt." (62). The  
clergy is leading a luxurious life, seeking merely pleasure and  
passtime:

"Also tuosten din zit vertriben,  
Mit spilen, hoffart und wiben,  
Mit hunden und mit vederspil,  
Mit tanzen, singen und aller kurzwil." (63).

One chronicler upon the occasion of the death of a canon while <sup>dancing</sup> dancing  
admonishes the clergy thus:

"Videte clerici! quam diligit Deus corizantes et huius  
exemplo mores vestros corrigite." (64).

Many clerics even went so far as to doff the cloth and tonsur for  
the garb of knights and courtiers (65).

{58} RA VII, 282, no. 186, in Thieremin, 43.

{59} Teufelsnetz, l. 1350.

{60} Lillencron I, no. 40, ll 487 ff. and 492 ff.

{61} Monfort, no. 29, l. 137 ff.



Among other things, the clergy neglected its duty. The priest often "list weder vesper noch messen" (66). In general all duties were performed in a slipshod fashion:

"Denn Messen wurden selten gelesen, F ruchmessen noch seltener, jeder bemuhte sich im geistlichen Amt, wie es ihm gefiel, und alles wurde in Verwirrung getan." (67).

The bishops were in part responsible, for they often omitted visitations entirely (68).

The immoral sex life of the clergy was particularly offensive to the laymen, especially since they had to take the vow of chastity. The literature throughout this period is replete with sarcastic stories and parodies based on the sexual transgressions of the clergy. The Kaufringer tells the story of a priest who demanded of a woman who came to confession:

"Des zehent minnen soll ich han." (69) .

After recording the story of "Der Pfaffe und die Pfeffin," a certain Meynster Heynrich appends the following admonition:

"Ir herren -----  
----- vertreibt solch pfaffen hindan  
Und ire weip die ungebueren." (70).  
"Ir werden priester, denokent dar an!  
Ir sollent euwer suende varen lan  
Und gedenket gotes von hiemelrich!" (71).

The people of Bern, "die gern gesehen haetten, dass die Pfaffen die Dirnen von sich liessen," expelled the concubines (72): According to the Teufelsnetz the priests:

"----- gar uppeklich vertriben  
Mit tuoben und mit wiben  
Von den tuot sant Paul schriben  
Das si kein tail in himel mugend han." (73).

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (63) Teufelsnetz, l. 3424.f.                                | (63) Teufelsnetz, l. 3931 ff.            |
| (64) Beness, 395, in Theremin, 48.                          | (65) Diessenhofen, 93, in Theremin, 48.  |
| (66) Teufelsnetz, l. 3880. Cf. also Teufelsnetz, p. 125 ff. | (66) Diessenhofen, 109, in Theremin, 48. |
| (67) Koenigshoven, 841, in Theremin, 45.                    | (68) Diessenhofen, 109, in Theremin, 48. |
| (69) Kaufringer, No. 12, l. 24. Cf. also No. 13.            | (70) Keller, p. 68, l. 35 ff.            |
| (70) Keller, p. 68, l. 35 ff.                               | (71) Keller, p. 68, l. 8 ff.             |
| (72) Bern c. 321, in Theremin, 48.                          | (73) Teufelsnetz, l. 3931 ff.            |



They do this to such an extent that the churches suffer:

"Und lat in die kilchen gan den regen." (74).

The financial corruption of the Church had well inoculated the great masses of the clergy with avarice, selfishness, and as a result simony flourished. As Hugo von Montfort writes:

"So phlegent priester simoni;  
Darsuo sint si nit wuochere fri  
Und suendliches fuerkufen.  
Etlicher wirt noch rofen  
Sich selber an dem juengsten tag  
Sin schatz in nit gehelfen mag.  
Is hoeher amp ie grosser puoss." (75).

In one of the folksongs the case is put just as strong:

"Wa denkt die mertail pfaffen hin  
Wann min auf geitikeit stat ir sinn  
Und doch got geitikeit verboten hat?" (76).

In the same work the blame for the schism and its results is laid at the door of those who practice simony:

"Dass pfaffenheit nit hat gotes huld,  
dass macht simoni, ir schuld,  
und woltens simoni ablan,  
so liess got ainikeit ufgan!" (77).

In addition, many priests devour the alms that were given for the furtherance of the work of the Church:

"——— ja mengen reden man  
Der das almuossen unbilich tuot essen." (78).

The clergy is so mercenary in popular opinion, that the people think:

"Umb all gotes gelaub man pfennig gert,  
gots gab man verkauft in der welt  
als rechte kaufmannschaft umb gelt." (79).

Simony among the clerics was closely related to the heaping of benefices, or the holding of pluralities. Since the time of Boniface IX benefices were sold to the highest bidders. Naturally the lower clergy imitated this system. Many grew wealthy merely by

{74} Teufelsnetz, l. 4849.  
{76} Lilliecron I, no. 50, l. 1189.  
{78} Teufelsnetz, l. 3878.

{75} Montfort, p. 53.  
{77} Lillienoron I, no. 50, l. 994.  
{79} Lillienoron I, no. 50, l. 1212 ff.



trading in benefices. Ruysbroek

"meint auf hundert Priester komme kaum ein guter;  
den Pfrundenkreufern sei alles Geistliche feil." (80)

No matter how large or small, all offices were open to him who could pay:

"Gots gab man verkauft -----

mang bistum, apti, prelatur,  
probsti, pfarr, pfrund, in der figur." (81).

He who did not possess his full complement of ecclesiastical <sup>and</sup> sine-  
cures was not considered a wise man:

"Der siwon hat allermaist  
vil pfarr, pfrund, gots gab tiufels lust,  
den haist man nuon ain waisen man,  
der nach vil gotsgab stellen kan,  
der allermaist pfrund, kirchen hab,  
ecce wans leben in got gab." (82).

Of certain canons the Teufelsnetz relates:

"Sie wend sich an ainr pfrond nit lan benuegen.  
s ttlicher weg tuond si es fuegen  
das ainr zwu oder dri hab,  
und nemands den armen luten ab." (83).

Influential prelates often bestowed valuable benefices upon  
their favorite retainers:

"Drissig diener nach hin louffen  
Man muess auch pfronden umb si kouffen." (84).

The avarice of the clergy often led them to fleece those who  
sought justice in the ecclesiastical courts. Justice was bought <sup>and</sup> and  
sold with the usual result that the poor were oppressed (85). Kauf-  
ringer tells an interesting story of a priest and a judge who con-  
spired to rob a rich peasant (86).

The ambition of the priests often lead to shady politics and  
disputed elections. In 1337 Johannes von Lichtenberg and Ulrich <sup>von</sup> von  
Sigenowe were both elected provost of the Cathedral at Strassburg <sup>(87)</sup> (87).

Olosener reports that:

(80) Lamprecht, 395. (81) Liliencron I, no. 50, l. 1313 and 1315-16.  
(82) Liliencron I, no. 50, l. 1319 ff. (83) Teufelsnetz, l. 4236 ff.  
(84) Teufelsnetz, l. 3199 ff. (85) Teufelsnetz, l. 3531 ff.



"Von der brobestie walunge erhob sich grosser krieg, der wohl ii jor werete." (88).

Popular opinion on the clergy, at least as it is evidenced in the foregoing examples, was certainly not favorable to the <sup>clergy</sup> clergy. once in a while, however, some author or other grants us a view of the other side. Monfort has heard of:

" ————— wissen pfaffen,  
Da sigint engel schon.

Si tuont dinn (God's) willn halten  
Ger snell und unverdrossen." (89).

Monfort also reprimands the people for not following the <sup>advice</sup> advice of at least some of the priests:

"Iederman tuot trachten  
Umb guot und wil nit achten  
Manges priester wis und ler,  
Darruo des adels er." (90).

He further apostrophizes the priesthood:

"O priesterschaft, du wert es ampt,  
Wer dich mit kunn geworden schampt,  
Dem tuo es got vergeben,  
Wan ir sind unser leben,  
Uff erden hie der grechten strass  
Ir wisent uns die rechten mass.  
Ich glob, und wer nit priesterschaft,  
Der tiefel wuerde sigehaft  
He das merteil and der christenheit." (91).

But nevertheless the people in general seemed to have been embittered by the deportment of their priests; to such an extent that they often thought of expelling them:

"Das meg uns bdingen keinen schaden  
der pfaffen wollen wir sin entladen.  
Dombherren und Vikarier  
und sonst auch alle pfaffen  
wie sie sind geschaffen  
die muessen alle uss der stat.  
Sie machen uns an eren mat.  
Sie tribend abwise also vil,  
minnen uns mutter, wib und swester,  
basen und mumen

*Closener, 114.*

{86} Kaufringer, No.3, p. 44 ff.

{89} Montfort, no.27, l. 41 ff and 47 ff.

{90} Montfort, no.5, l. 317 ff.

{87} Closener, 114. {88} Closener, 114.

{91} Montfort, no.5, l. 361 ff.



wann sie heimlich zu in kumen;  
wir wollen des in sin entladen  
dass die pfaffen triben sulohen schaden." (92).

"Es mag an schaden nicht ergan  
under so vil pfaffen  
wan si hant ie ze schaffen  
mit frowen und auch mit meiden  
drumb wollen wir sie scheiden  
die von iren wiben  
und sie aus den hofen triben." (93).

Under the circumstances one could expect little amelioration and the clergy day by day sunk deeper into the slough of corruption<sup>-~~ten~~</sup> (94). Eberhardt Windecke seems to have hit the proper chord:

"Man hoert gar wenig gutes von den Geistlichen, sondern eitel boeses, schnoede Hoffart und Eigenwillen und Mutwillen; es moechte wohl Gott erbarmen." (95).

The references in the preceding section dealt mainly with the secular clergy, although in the more general expressions of opinion, the terms Pfaffe and Priesterschaft and similar designations<sup>-~~ten~~</sup> cannot be absolutely restricted to the lower, secular clergy. In the present section, only those expressions of opinion shall be cited which deal specifically with the regular clergy or the monastic system.

Even the cautious Hugo von Montfort who, as noted above, carefully restricted his criticism, laments the decline of the monastic orders:

"Woelt ich dann in ein closter varn,  
Darinn ist neid und mass." (96).

"Es ist kein cristanlicher orden  
Man verdient darum uebel oder gut.  
Tuost du mit guoten werchen horden,  
So bist du zwar gar wohlbehuot." (97).

"Man es ist nicht ein grechter orden,  
Die bepst hand si im ban;  
Darinn wer eins zermal verdorben,  
Wib und och die man." (98).

(92) Liliencron I, no. 40, l. 86 ff.

(95) Windecke, 287, in Theremin, 49.

(97) Montfort, no. 19, l. 185 ff.

(93) Liliencron I, no. 40, l. 113 ff.

(94) Gobel in 153, Meins, 173, in

(96) Montfort, no. 19, l. 133 ff.

(98) Montfort, no. 19, l. 137 ff.



Montfort's criticism coincides well with that of the Teufelsnetz (99). Here the inhabitants of the monasteries are described as lazy, frittering away their time with play and women:

"Sie achtent klein der altvetter lecen  
Die in hertun orden tatend streben." (100).

"All uppkait, hoffart tuot von in fliessen." (101).

According to the Chronicle of Mainz the monks led an "indecent" life and could not be restrained by anyone but a strict and powerful <sup>abbot</sup> abbot who would insist upon them keeping the rules of the order (102).

The upshot of such conditions was that conscientious people would no longer take vows, for:

"Wer uezet gaistlich wil sin  
Der het man als ain swin.  
Und ist des Aptz und der muench spot  
Wer sich gentzlich wil keren zue got." (103).

For were the abbots and priors any better. They often gained their offices through royal or papal favor, even in opposition to the local chapter. The Chronicle of Reichensau, written by a monk of that cloister, is replete with reports on contested and disputed elections (104). The Teufelsnetz describes a typical pre-election atmosphere:

"Sie (the monks of the chapter) tuonda also bestellen:  
Zem erst got nid und hass herfuer,  
Getz vorcht ist da worden tuer.  
Was ainr dem andern ie hat getan  
Daz wil er ietz an im nit ungerochen lan." (105)

Then they proceed to elect one who will give them the most benefices, lives as they live, and bestow upon them the offices and <sup>favours</sup> favors they seek. (106).

In this manner many were elevated to an abbacy who were unfit for the position. The Chronicle of Reichensau reports, for example, that "Fridericus" — a Count of Zohr, by the way — who ruled in

(99) Teufelsnetz, 1.4684 ff.

(101) Teufelsnetz, 1.5092.

(103) Teufelsnetz, 1.4708. ff.

(105) Teufelsnetz, 1.4743 ff.

(100) Teufelsnetz, 1. 4692 f.

(102) Mainz, 235, in Theremin, 45.

(104) Reichensau, pp.32-184.



Reichenau from 1402-27, was "der geschriff gantz ungelert" (107).

Another could or would not keep his promises:

"Was er zusagte, brach er wieder." (108) .

They, like the regular clergy, spent much time play and diversion:

"Und wend tuon als weltlich herren  
Man spricht gern und ist och war:  
'Wann der apt wuerfel lert dar,  
So mugend die muench wol spilen gan." (109).

The abbots were often by virtue of their office overlords of good-sized fiefs, which they often misgoverned. Mangoldus (ca. 1379) is reported to have put out the eyes of five fishermen from Constance with his own fingers for trespassing. (110).

The cloister at Hersfeld had become so demoralized that when Abbot Berthold II (1388-88) through his warlike inclinations had brought the cloister into dire financial straits, the monks became the butt of the following popular satire:

"Bei seiner gewalt  
Was neue worden  
die regel ores alten orden,  
die mussten drei jar leiden gezwang  
aus hungers not an iren dank  
des was ein itzlich monch  
seins gebets unfrolich." (111).

According to the cautious and careful Montfort all monastic orders were corrupt but that of the Franciscans:

"Darinn wer eins zwar unverdorben,  
Es wer uf grechten wegen." (112).

But the Teufelsnetz, on the other hand, closes its section on the monasteries with the admonition:

"Wiltu sin ain biderman,  
so lass din wip nit vil in die cloester gan  
und hab nit vil mit in ze schaffen  
mit muenchen und och mit pfaffen." (113).

- (106) Teufelsnetz, l. 4748 ff.  
(108) Lillienoron I, no. 30, l. 348.  
(110) Reichenau, p. 158.  
(112) Montfort, no. 29, l. 155.

- (107) Reichenau, p. 157.  
(109) Teufelsnetz, l. 4857 ff.  
(111) Lillienoron I, no. 30, l. 536. ff  
(113) Teufelsnetz, l. 5088 ff.



## VI. Public Opinion on the Bishops

In general contemporaries had a very poor opinion of the occupants of episcopal sees. "Doch wie unrecht ist ihr Leben," is the complaint of the Teufelsnetz (114). "Land und luet ueber sie clagen" (115). According to Lamprecht Ruysbroek thought that the bishops cared little for the service of the Church and that it would be great good fortune if one could still find a right-minded one among them (116). Neglect of duty was a not infrequent occurrence:

"Wan si gotzdienst land underwegen  
Und schoenen frowen tuont pflegen." (117).

"Si wend ie nit lernen studieren  
Si gund vil gerner hoffieren  
Als zuo den schoenen wiben." (118).

Simon von Sternberg in Paderborn, for instance, read hardly two masses during his whole incumbency (119). Bishops of this type were far more concerned with satisfying their craving for pleasure and worldly life than the duties of their offices (120). Bishop Albrecht of Querfurt is especially mentioned, with whom:

"vile vrawen besprochen waren, solange er gesund  
war." (121)

and a bishop of Luetlich, who had:

"sein unreyns levent mit frowen und juncfrowen." (122).

Another bishop labored under the following reputation:

"Er wollte warten bei dem grossen Almosen, bis sein  
Vatter stuerbe, dass er dann von dem Almosen traete  
und von Gott floehe und zum Teufel liefe, Gottes  
Ehre verschmaechte und der Welt Ehre an sich nahmte."  
(123).

Then, too, many bishops were not able to do their duty. Some

(114) Teufelsnetz, 1.3268.

(116) Lamprecht, 395.

(118) Teufelsnetz, 1. 3304 ff.

(120) Posilge, 93, in Theremin, 46.

(122) Detmar 26, 143, in Theremin, 47.

(115) Teufelsnetz, 1. 3310.

(117) Teufelsnetz, 1. 3322.

(119) Gobel in, 127, in Theremin, 38.

(121) Magdeburg, 314, in Theremin, 47.

(123) Bern, c.334, in Theremin, 28.



were "ungelert in papeliken kunsten" (124) and "sympel in der Schrift" (125). Others were young and inexperienced: "jung an Jahren" (126); "junk und wylde" (127); "juvenis in verbis" (128)

Some bishops were preoccupied with secular affairs. Johann von Lichtenberg, Bishop of Strassburg, led his troops against Hagewone in 1359 (129). In 1319 his predecessor, Bertholt von Bucheck, successfully besieged and captured the castle at Stouffenberg <sup>(130)</sup>. Many did not even submit to the ceremony of consecration and induction into office. They absorbed all the financial resources of the respective sees, subletting their administration to suffragans <sup>(131)</sup>, who were often far worse equipped for their work than the bishops themselves (132).

The fact that such men as those described above could be elevated to the episcopal dignity was possible only through the <sup>corrupt</sup> system of appointments. Hitherto the influence of the local <sup>chapter</sup> had been predominant. But now the popes exploited these offices for their own financial and political purposes. Even on the occasion of new elections by the local chapters bribery was by no means infrequent (133). According to the Teufelnetz:

"Man tuot bistuom ietz kouffen und verkouffen." <sup>(134)</sup> (134).

Such elections were often condemned:

"Ille electio erat tota per symoniam, quia omnibus data vel promissa fuit pecunia." (135).

The Chronicle of Constance declares that they were against God's will (136). Another chronicle even sees fit to praise a bishop because such was not the case in his election:

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| (124) Rynesberch, 135, in Theremin, 28.         | (125) Rufus, 28, 37, in Theremin, 28. |
| (126) Koelhoff, 684, 693, 701, in Theremin, 27. |                                       |
| (127) Rufus, 28, 31, in Theremin, 27.           | (128) Gobelín, 130, in Theremin, 27.  |
| (129) Closener, 80.                             | (130) Closener, 78.                   |
| (131) Koenigshoven, 673, in Theremin, 28.       | (132) Mainz, 172, in Theremin, 28.    |
| (133) Theremin, 27.                             | (134) Teufelnetz, 1.3363.             |
| (135) Mone I, 325, in Theremin, 27.             | (136) Konstanz, 93, in Theremin, 27.  |



"Laudandus existat excellenter quod symoniam hypocritarum audebat detegere, quam aliqui libenter pro se at aliis celassunt et plura latentur et plura latenter dedissent!" (137).

The Teufelsnetz gives us a good picture of such episcopal politics:

"Ietz tuond si darnach stellen,  
So si einen wend erwellen  
"Menger tuot vil darumb verhalissen  
Und ein andren vast daran reizen,  
Das ieglicher gern der obrost waer:  
Si denend uns gar offenbaer.  
Mit sogetanen sachen  
Tuond si die cristenhait swachen." (138).

The fact that many bishops were secular princes and that they squandered large sums on luxurious life often brought them into dire financial straits. As a consequence they taxed their own clergy "mit ungewoehnlichen Abgaben" (139) and plundered their own countries. After Adolf von Koeln had left Rolandsack, "fand man nicht ein Tisch-tuch" (140). One bishop:

"----- fragt nicht nach den sitten sin,  
Bringt man im nur vil der guldin." (141).

Others diverted the alms given by their own people to their own use:

"O wie wissend die (the bishops) dasselb almuessen  
Damit man sollt singen und lesen  
Die das bistum uf gend  
Und dennoch gross guot davon nend:  
Das ist ungerecht getan." (142).

"Mich duenkt," writes a later scribe on the Koelhoff <sup>Chronicle</sup> of a certain bishop, "dass der Chronist will sagen, dass er mehr <sup>ge-</sup>wesen ist ein Wolf und ein Mietling, als ein Hirt, er hat die Wolle abgeschoren mit der Haut." (143).

One folksong portrays the avarice of the bishops very graphically: <sup>-ally</sup>

"Neukirchen gens die hutent vast  
der Federn vor den rouchen (Wolves),  
einer zocket hin, einer zocket dar,  
das wert der Letgow werden gewar,  
dick tunts die wolf versuchen  
doch hilft sie nit ein genselin  
sie müssen haben grosse swin  
ie sie ihr huenen (barking) lassen sin." (144)

And another:

"Ien gotes sluessel sint bekant  
die sint ze roubern worden  
si stiften mord und ouch brant  
geschendet si ir orden." (145).

(137) Diessenhofen 35-36, in Theremin, 37.

(138) Teufelsnetz, 1.3292.ff.

(139) Min., 173, in Theremin, 33.



The relations of the bishops to the citizens of the towns is also of some importance, especially since many bishops were, either in their own right or by virtue of their office, feudal overlords of their respective towns and cities. Mutual suspicions and recriminations were the order of the day. The cities were often oppressed financially as described above. Often they were deceived outright, as for instance when the Bishop of Magdeburg used a false pallium before his confirmation in order to obtain the homage of his people. Ever after the people mistrusted him. "Davon mag man sich mer bewaren." (146). Another Magdeburg bishop was reported to be:

"In allen dingen so unstaet und ungewiss, dass sich nach seinem Reden und Tun niemand richten koennte, er wandelte seine Worte so schnell, wie sich ein man wenden kann und machte ja zu nein und nein zu ja, und log so viel, dass ihm die Leute gram wurden und ihn niemand pries." (147).

The city of Dortmund refused alliances with the Archbishop of Cologne because he had deceived them in the past (148). In Magdeburg the citizens often came to blows with the servants of the bishop who robbed them of their cattle (149). The burghers of Augsburg entrusted sixty barrels of wine and twenty bales of good to their bishop for safekeeping. The bishop immediately divided the wine and the goods with Duke Stephen of Bavaria. That is how he came to have this reputation:

"Er war ein rechter Boesewicht, er ward meineidig, treulos, ehrlos, denn er hatter der Stadt und dem Capitel geschworen." (150).

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|--|--|
| (140) Koelhoff, 693, in Theremin, 34.  | (141) Teufelsnetz, 1. 3350 f.          |
| (142) Teufelsnetz, 1. 3378 ff.         | (143) Koelhoff, 684, in Theremin, 34f  |
| (144) Lilliencron I, no. 18, v. 10.    | (145) Lilliencron I, no. 19, v. 3.     |
| (146) Magdeburg, 208, in Theremin, 37. | (147) Magdeburg, 277, in Theremin, 30. |
| (148) Dortmund, 385, in Theremin, 39.  | (149) Magdeburg, 222, 276, in          |
| Theremin, 38 f.                        |  |
| (150) Augsburg 84, in Theremin p. 39.  |  |



In 1367 Johann von Biene, Bishop of Basel, alarmed at the increasing power of the cities under his jurisdiction, ordered the city of Biel to abrogate its treaties with Berne. When Biel refused, he captured its most prominent citizens and sought to enforce his demands with arms. The cities of Biel and Berne accused him of breaking his oath:

"Er swuor in uf die Truewe sin  
des ist er Meineid worden." (151).

The morality of the bishops, certainly <sup>was</sup> not high, yet there were occasional and sometimes brilliant exceptions to the common run. Some of the bishops are described as "demuetig, fleissig und ernsthaft zum Gottesdienst." (152). Another:

"weinte selbst die pfaffen und kirchen und tat auch andere D inge selbst, die ein Bischof tun soll." (153).

Still another "predigte immer den Leuten" (154). The chronicles also speak of those who were "genuegend zum Gottesdienst" (155). and "wohlgeleert in geistlichen Recht" (156) or god-fearing, religious, and moral (157). Even before he became bishop Kuno von Falkenstein was reputed to be "der frumste Deutsche" who lived at that time (158) and "ein frumer furste" (159). Other bishops kept the wellbeing of the church constantly in mind and were "weise, klug und erfahren in allen weltlichen Sachen" (160) and ruled with "grosser Weisheit, Vorsichtigkeit und Sorgfalt" (161).

Conrad von Mainz protected the property of his subject even <sup>against</sup> royal aggression and hoped "wolle gott, dass keine Reichstadt bei mir beschadet oder in meine Schlosse beschaedigt werde" (162).

The testimonial of these chronicles is sufficient to establish the fact that all bishops had not succumbed to the contagion that

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(151) Millicron I, no. 19, v. 4 and notes. (152) Koenigshoven, 873, in Theremin, 27 f.  
(153) Koenigshoven, 873, in Theremin, 27 f. (154) Posilge, 93, in Theremin, 28.  
(155) Magdeburg, 281, in Theremin, 28. (156) Koenigshoven, 873, in Theremin, 28.



was drawing through the Church. But the very fact that such <sup>and</sup> cases are mentioned would tend to indicate that they were regarded as extraordinary and contrary to the prevailing standards. Hugo von Montfort followed exactly this very procedure both in reference to the clergy and the monastic orders. (183). At any rate the great mass of evidence cited above would certainly justify the assertion that the bishops and their morals were far from ideal and were noticeably on the down grade.

## VII. Public Opinion on the Cardinals.

The cardinals are treated with no more leniency in the literature of this period than the bishops, although they are mentioned less frequently -- and naturally so, for they were less numerous and spent probably most of their time at the papal court, having, therefore, less contact with the people than the bishops and the lower clergy.

The same notorious traits, with which the bishops and the lower clergy were stamped, reappear again in the cardinals. They, too, are disinclined to perform the duties incumbent upon them:

"So sehend si kain goetlich sach an,  
Darumb muos der glob krank stan." (184).

Still worse, they are responsible for the present sad state of Christendom:

"Dann grosse hoptpreläten:  
Die blasent iren aten  
Zuo der sach durch gitikeit." (185).

Pride and arrogance characterizes the successors to the apostles:

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- (157) Ryneberch, 128; Gobelín, 130; Posilge, 235; Mainz, 222; in Theremin, 28.  
 (158) Koenigshoven, 538, in Theremin 31. (159) Koelhoff, 697, in Theremin, 31.  
 (160) Rufus, 28, 31, in Theremin, 31. (161) Magdeburg 255; Koelhoff, 684, 686; in Theremin, 31.  
 (162) Augsburg, 94, in Theremin, 37. (163) Cf. above, pp. 26 and 28.  
 (164) Teufelnetz, 1.3173. (165) *Montfort*, No. 5, 1202 ff.



"So ritent die nachganden aposteln als die herren."  
(166).

Discarding the poor clothing of the apostles, or throwing it upon their chargers (167), they array themselves in:

"Rot scharlatin und sidin gewand,  
Das ist laster und ist schand." (168).

They ride

"mit roten Gewand uff hoen rossen." (169).

Instead of using their high position for the amelioration of conditions as they are, they followed the advice of the pope (170), receiving in return whatever they requested (171). Their retainers received no set wages but were provided with benefices:

"Man muos ooh pfironden umb si kouffen  
Kein simoni schatt in mit." (172).

In summing up the reputations of the cardinals, the Teufelsnetz says:

"Das sind all boes meinungen." (173).

#### VIII. Public Opinion on the Pope and the Curia.

The preceding sketches show that popular opinion on the clergy, from the parish priest and the monk to the cardinal, was by no means favorable. The desire for reformation among the laymen was not at all weak. (174). Yet even though the popes gave added cause for complaint, even the schism was not able to shatter the long <sup>and</sup> accepted doctrine that the pope was necessary. The people were still "ganz paepstlich gesinnt" (175). The popes were still called the "Versorger der Christenheit," when they built churches or founded monastic orders (176). When Clemens VI (1342-53) reintroduced the Year of Jubilee (1350), he was regarded as truly clemens because

(166) Teufelsnetz, 1.3159.

(168) Teufelsnetz, 1.3185 f.

(170) Teufelsnetz, 1.3188.

(172) Teufelsnetz, 1.3200 f.

(174) Cf. above, p. 12 f.; Lamprecht, 402.

(175) Therenin, 50.

(167) Teufelsnetz, 1.3181 f.

(169) Teufelsnetz, 1.3183.

(171) Teufelsnetz, 1.3189 ff.

(173) Teufelsnetz, 1.3213.

(176) Mainz 172, 179; Limburg, c. 80,



he wished to save all "nach der Sitte des Erloesers, dessen Schafe er hier auf Erden weidete" (177). The people did not, then, attack the papal system as such, but merely the individuals who occupied the papal throne.

The general opinion concerning the successors of St. Peter were not very laudatory. They ruled in such a manner that they had

"verloren den gotlichen segn." (178) .

They were characterized by "hoffart, gittikeit, uebermuot" (179).

As with the bishops, justice could not be obtained from the popes:

"Nach gerechtigkeit ist kein frag  
Das ist alles ungoetlich getan." (180).

The removal of the papal see to Avignon also had its <sup>effects</sup> evil effects. Besides making it a satellite of the French kingdom and arousing the national feelings of other nations, it threatened the papal states with disintegration, especially at the hands of the Visconti of Milan (181). These conditions served to stimulate the imperialistic tendencies of the popes. Popes were elected who could best defend the papal domain. One of them was reputed to be "ungelert an Kuensten und doch der Wiseste an weltlichen Sachen und Kriegen" (182). John XXIII was said to have been elected for the express purpose of bringing other cities and countries back to the Church. (183). The martial propensities of the popes were often condemned, as for instance, by the Chronicle of Mainz, which reminded the pope of various expressions which forbade strife, such as Christ's command to Peter, "mitte gladium in vaginam" or that of Martin, "Christi miles sum; mihi pugnare non licet." (184). Even though Boniface IX regained much territory for the Church by means of money, persuasion, and weapons, he gained little praise thereby. What little he did

c. 87; in Theremin, 50.

(177) Diessenhofen, 75, in Theremin, 50.

(179) Teufelsnetz, 1.3039.

(181) Lamprecht, 393; Theremin, 51.

Theremin, 51.

(183) Theremin, 51.

(178) Teufelsnetz, 1.3047.

(180) Teufelsnetz, 1.3134.

(182) Koenigshoven, 300, in

(184) Theremin, 51.



receive came only from those "die aus seinen Weg wandelten"(185).

"Er herrschte nicht wie ein Papst, sondern wie ein harter Kaiser" (186).

Papal politics being as they were, it was only natural that they resulted in such perversions as nepotism and simony. The popes bestowed favors freely upon their friends and relatives and loved them more than the common good (187). They did not make their appointments on the basis of merit,

"wovon die Kirche allgemein Schaden in geistlichen und weltlichen Dingen erlitten."(188).

The practice of nepotism depleted the papal treasury as much as did the secular undertakings of the popes and the pomp of their courts. Consequently they were continually forced to seek new sources of income. And one of these was simony.

Previously simony had been discouraged, as for instance, by Gregory VII (1073-85) and Innocent III (1198-1212) (189) but it was now fully recognized and condoned at the curia. Clemens VI (1342-53), the Koenigshoven chronicle reports, lusted after glory and wealth and brought shame upon his court by the practice of simony (190). Gregory XI (1370-78) "hielt sich mehr zu den Reichen und Edlen als zu den Armen" (191). He paid little attention to the poor clerics and dispensed benefices and honoraria, the value of which varied in direct proportion to the size of the bribe (192). In all this Boniface IX imitated him (193). No matter how many benefices one had, more could always be obtained:

"Kumpt sinr der zehen pfonden hat,  
Es si ze frueg oder ze spat  
Willi er mehr an velt und begehrt:  
Hat er gold, der babst in ert  
Und licht was sinr gebitten mag." (194) .

(186) Gobel in, 136; Engelhus, 1134; in Theremin, 51.

(187) Koenigshoven, 536, in Theremin, 54.

(188) Diessenhofen, 109, in Theremin, 54.

(189) Lea, p. 7.

(190) Koenigshoven, 533, in Theremin, 54.

(191) Koenigshoven, 593, in Theremin, 54.

(192) Mainz, 125; 186, in Theremin, 54.



All offices were for sale to him who would pay:

"gots gab man verkauft -----

mang bistuom, apti, prelator,  
probsti, pfarr, pfund, in der figur." (195) .

"Die pabete pflagen fast der simoni  
wider got und wider recht  
wer pfund und gotes gab begert  
praecht er gelt, so was er gewert.  
wer mit leren taschen ohom  
der moecht sein nuz nicht schaffen." (196).

Fritsche O losener reports the publication of Marsilius of Padua's  
book, Defensor Pacis, with apparent approbation:

"In den ziten (the age of King Ludwig) war das buch  
gemaecht, das do heisset Defensor pacis, das bewiset  
mit redelichen spruschen der heiligen geschrift, das ein  
babest under eine keiser so sin, un das er kein welt-  
lich herrschaft sol han. Es bewis ouch des bobestes  
un der cardinal gyt (- git - Gier, Habsucht) un ire  
hofart, un ire symonie, die su gewoehnlich tribent, und  
sich des beshonent mit falschen glosen." (197).

The people were no less dissatisfied with the extraordinary  
assessments and tithes which the pope levied from time to time and  
which materially increased the annual payments demanded of the <sup>priests</sup> priests.  
The pope often sent special agents to collect these sums, since the  
lower clergy was often reluctant to pay. On one occasion when the  
pope sent a legate to Mainz for this purpose, the citizens banded  
together with the clergy in refusing him admittance, for they  
wished to hear nothing of his deceit in respect to the collection of  
money, "fuer den Papst oder fuer wer weiss wen" (198). The citizens  
regarded themselves as fleeced, because their churches and benefices  
were thus encumbered (199). Exactions of this nature they openly  
branded extortion (200), even though the money was used for the  
benefit of the Church, the cloisters, or for <sup>a</sup>worthy causes (201);

(193) Gobel, 137, in Theremin, 55. (194) Teufelnetz, 1.3118 ff.

(195) Liliencron I, no. 50, 1.1213 and 1215 f.

(196) Liliencron I, no. 51, 1.30. ff. (197) Closener, p. 54 f.

(198) Mainz, 223, in Theremin, 57.

(199) Koenigshoven 583, in Theremin, 57.

(200) Mainz, 178, 179, in Theremin, 57. (201) Mainz, 179, in Theremin, 57.



This shows us, incidentally, how the laity had to bear the brunt of papal financial oppression, although on the face of it the face of it, the clergy were primarily concerned.

The people were also embittered because of the inconsiderate manner in which the curia impounded the property and funds of deceased bishops. All this property, which some bishops amassed for the good of the Church, did more harm than good. As soon as it became known that a bishop had left behind a sizeable estate, it would happen that

"der Schlund der unersättlichen Habgier der Curie, die allezeit Gelddurst hat, davon gespeist werden musste." (303).

The pope would immediately send a legate to take possession of everything the bishop once had owned, jewels, wine, grain, furniture, sold it, and

"beraubte dadurch die Kirche zum Schaden mit solch grosser ungewöhnlicher Schande aller Menschen." (303).

¶ The papal institutions of indulgences and pilgrimages were also being criticized. The pilgrims who came home from Rome were often worse than before they left (304). Another chronicler feels that pilgrimages may be overdone:

"Wiewol alles gutes nicht mag ze wil gesin,  
doch ein sollich ueberflissigkeit moecht  
under ainvaltigem volck machen ein greuse." (305).

Others doubted their value outright. The flags were dedicated in the churches, says one author, "sonst weis ich keinen Nutzen, der davon kam" (306). Later on the proverbs were coined:

"Wallfahrt bringt keine Wohlfahrt!  
"Wer oft wallfahren tut, wird selten gut." (306).

(303) Koelhoff, 686, in Theremin, 58. (303) Koelhoff, 683, in Theremin<sup>ff</sup>, 58.  
(304) Limburg, 34, in Theremin, 17. (305) Seffner, 304, in Theremin, 17.  
(306) Liebe, Wallfahrten, 156, in Theremin, 17. Cf. also Theremin 17 f.  
on the Romfahrten.



Indulgences were often given to various religious foundations in great numbers upon the payment of stipulated sums. This is the advice given by a folksong in view of the promiscuous sale of what to the people was righteousness:

"Acht nicht auf ein treulos swern  
der babst nimmt und vergibt es  
und greif froelich nach der hobe  
der pfaffen und der efelleut." (207).

(207).

Even Montfort claims that the pope "verkoft die Gerechtigkeit." (208).

Of several popes we find especial mention made. Of Clemen VI (1342-52) it was said that he had open and public relations with women (209). Boniface IX (1388-1404) farmed out the minting of his money to merchants (210), thereby practicing "usury," which was forbidden by the Church. One of his decrees created much surprise. He ordered that every member of a mendicant order who wished to transfer to a non-mendicant order pay the curia one hundred florins for the privilege, a sum which they did not, or, at least should not have possessed (211). His extortions in Rome led to the assertion that "er wolle es nicht nur mit Worten beweisen, dass der D<sup>er</sup> <sup>nach</sup> urst nach Gold nicht mit Gold geloescht werden koenne, sondern mit der Tat." (212). Of John XXIII (1410-1415) the Richental chronicle reports:

"Der selb brapst der XXIII, der liess die auch also besten und wolt sich villicht laussen benuegen an soelicher wirdikeit, die im geben was, dann er fue geneigt was uff zittlich er und guot, und verlangt sich also lang, das grosse (red) uffstand." (213).

Some of the charges upon which this pope was deposed by the Council of Constance were so shameful that they were not made public for fear of injuring the prestige of the papacy (214), for he was "von art ein boesser Mensch, unkeusch, glerig und anderer Untugend voll" (215) and had "maniger hande bosheit, die er begenger hatter gegen

{207} Lillienoron I, no.40, l.533. {208} Montfort, no.5, l.231.

{209} Koenigshoven, 536, in Theremin, 47.

{210} Koenigshoven, 600, in Theremin, 58.

{211} Gobelín, 139, in Theremin, 58

{212} Richental, p.15.

{213} Gobelín, 153, in Theremin, 58.

{214} Posilge 351, 356, in Theremin, 47.







According to another chronicle the effects of the schism were strongly felt by the people in their daily life:

"Die grosse Not des Schismas, das Seele und Leib rührte und 40 Jahr währte, Obwohl concilien gewesen waren." (226).

"Auf alle frommen Menschen sei grosse Beschwerde und Betrübniß gekommen, wie es billig war." (227)

Many a one died "sorglich" because "beide Teile meinen Recht zu haben und der andere habe Unrecht, so haben sie beide Unrecht" (228). The rival popes banned each other and their adherents.

"Darum ist die ganze Christenheit im Bann" (229).

In 1407 the popes, Gregory XII of Rome and Benedict XIII of Avignon, had promised to meet at Savona to settle the schism, but they accomplished nothing. The people experienced in these viceregerents of Christ the partial truth of an old proverb:

"Bei alten Leuten hehmen alle Sünden ab, ausgenommen die Habgier, die wächst und nimmt zu; denn diese beiden waren beinahe hundert Jahre alt, aber sie achteten nicht, ob es der Christenheit wohl oder unbel erginge, wenn sie nur bei der Herrschaft bleiben konnten!" (230).

The result of this meeting was the Council of Pisa (1409) at which both popes were deposed and another elected (Alexander V). But the first two and their adherents refused to recognize the validity of the Council's action and the schism became worse:

"dass aus einem werden drei das zeucht sich vast auf Ketzerel." (231).

After the election of John XXIII the Richental chronicle complains of

"soelicher irrung, das sant Peters schiff under wölte gan, das doch nicht sein mag." (232).

And the Teufelsnetz concludes that:

"Nach gerechtigkeit ist kein frag Das ist alles ungoetliches getan." (233).

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|--|---|
| (217) Detmer, 26, 79, in Theremin, 60.                 | (218) Cesterreich, 200, in Theremin, 60.  |
| (219) Teufelsnetz, 1.3071 ff.                          | (220) Koenigshoven, 584, in Theremin, 60. |
| (221) Korner, c. 688, c. 721, c. 900, in Theremin, 60. |   |
| (222) Cesterreich, 199, in Theremin, 60.               |   |
| (223) Rufus, 38, 42, in Theremin, 60.                  | (224) C esterreich, 201, in Theremin, 61. |
| (225) Detmer, 19, 561, in Theremin, 61.                |   |
| (226) Bern, c. 345, in Theremin, 61.                   | (227) Bern, c. 347, in Theremin, 61.      |
| (228) Bern, c. 348, in Theremin, 62.                   | (229) Cesterreich, 201, in Theremin, 60.  |



# IX. Public Opinion on the Council of Constance.

Finding little hope for solving the schism among the popes, the people gradually absorbed the ideas of Marilius of Padua and Dietrich of Niem, who stressed the superiority of the council to the pope. Dietrich of Niem also suggested that the laity take its place at the council table. The Emperor Sigismund, who was elected in 1410, immediately acted in accordance with these theories and forced the calling of a council. This action of his met with strong popular approval:

"Er allein der loeffuerst ist  
der das concilli uf die frist  
zuweg mit fleiss hat erdacht  
und mit gotes hilf hat zesammenbracht." (234).

One thing the council did accomplish; the schism was successfully healed. The Church was united again under one head. But its <sup>reform-</sup>reformatory activities were nipped in the bud, partly because of the new pope, Martin V, who was not in sympathy with them, and partly because of the character of those who attended the council:

"Koffert, gittikeit und nid und hasen  
Und alles das da ist wider das,  
Dass da ain einkheit sol sin." (235)

The popes refused to cooperate with the council and the council reciprocated:

"Dass irrung ist in der obrosten kunet  
Der babet wils wider das concilium han  
Das concilium wider den babet wil stan  
Und iedermann hanget an einem teil." (236).

They did not remedy the holding of pluralities and the evil consequences resulting therefrom;

"Der grossen pfonden tuond si sich nit wassen  
Und sind dazuo also verlassen,  
E si die wend von in lan;  
Das concilium muesste sehen jar stan." (237)

(230) Koenigshoven, 613, in Therenin, 33 f.

(231) Liliencron I, no. 50, 1375.

(232) Teufelnetz, 1.3124 f.

(233) Teufelnetz, 1.3944 f.

(234) Teufelnetz, 1.3971 ff.

(235) Richental, p. 15.

(236) Liliencron I, no. 50, 1375 f.

(237) Teufelnetz, 1.3973 ff.



The same work calls for a reformation of the council itself:

"Man solt reformieren in dem concilium  
Und verkunden in land umb und umb;  
Denn der hailig gaist bi in solt wesen." (238).

Furthermore, the council often did more harm than good, in the opinion of a contemporary:

"Darumb so muos der gut glob zergen  
Das sieht denn meng mensch an  
Wie kann der ein guoten geloben han?" (239).

"Meng ungeloub denn davon ufstat." (240).

As a consequence the people placed little confidence in the council and its promises:

"Wo man an suse in der welt umb seit,  
Nieman sich ietz an si leit." (241).

Thus it was that the council partly because of its own deficiencies and partly because it had elected a pope, who did not favor reform before they attempted to solve these pressing problems themselves. And problems they were that had festered for over a century and which were now destined to attain to no definite crisis for a century to come.

## X. Conclusion.

Popular writers on the hierarchy and the papacy during the fourteenth century and the early conciliar period were, as has been shown, fairly well united in condemning the corruption and the decline which characterized the Church of these times. The Teufelsnetz sums up the reaction to the whole ecclesiastical system as it was then constituted in the following assertion:

"Herumb, so tuond die weltlichen sagen:  
Tuonds dasselb die gaitlichen luste,  
Wie mugen sie denn uns verbueten?  
Schadatz in nuet gitikeit und uebermuot,  
Sicher, so sind wir och all guot." (242)

{238} Teufelsnetz, 1.2957 ff.  
{240} Teufelsnetz, 1.2934.  
{242} Teufelsnetz, 1.3220 ff.

{239} Teufelsnetz, 1.2954. ff.  
{241} Teufelsnetz, 1.2995 f.



That there were still some members of the hierarchy who did not succumb to the tendencies of the times is apparent from the exceptions which were from time to time noted. But the consensus of opinion indicates that the people fully realized the low level to which the Church had sunk, and realized it so well that they protested in word and in deed, as for instance, in the sporadic attempts either to reform the clergy of the respective cities or, failing in this, to expell them and in the active part they played before and during the Council of Constance especially through the good offices of the Emperor Sigismund, who symbolized the rising power of the laity.

That the people did not, in general, think of rejecting the papal system, that they attacked the abuse of that system rather than the system per se, will readily become evident from the tenor of the complaints against these abuses. Practically all the authors quoted above seem to have the welfare of the Church at heart. They lament the passing of true faith and belief, the true faith and belief of none other but the Medieval Church. The majority of the people also disapproved of the heretical sects which arose during this period and which condemned both the organization and the doctrine of the Church.

The rise of the heretical sects was a product of the idea that the clergy was too corrupt and unworthy to perform the duties of their office and that it was necessary, in view of this fact, to take care of one's own soul. (243). Some of these heretics refused to stop at attacking the corruption of the clergy; they ruthlessly denounced the Church and all that the Church implied:

"De religiosis et clericis et ecclesie sacramentis non sobire sentiunt et loquuntur objuraciones et correctiones respiciunt et persuasiones fastidiunt, immo contemptunt." (244)

{ 243 } Theremin, 21 ff.

{ 244 } Herford, 381 f., in Theremin, 10.



Many of the heretics rejected the mass as a mere "Zuckuck der Pfaffen" (245). They refused to fast and obey the rules of the Church (246). They furthermore held that a layman had as much right to ordain as a priest, that no pope or bishop could grant indulgences, that prayer, alms, hearing of masses, and fasting for the dead were useless (247). In and among these heretical views we find many many of the germs of Protestant thought during the Reformation.

At first these heretical movements gained quite a little approbation, for "die Geissler seien Leute, die die Wahrheit <sup>sagten</sup> sagten" (248). But these movements soon declined. They recruited their bands among robbers, thieves, and undesirable women (249). They were regarded as "gemein" (250) and "hovellos," since they had no head or leader (251). They were "ohne Klugheit, einfaltig, in dem sie zwar den Anschein der Froemdigkeit erweckten, aber durch den Sauerteig ihrer Torheiten alles verderben" (252). The flagellant and other kindred heresies disappeared almost as quickly as they had arisen. The same author who so caustically condemns the corruption of the hierarchy in almost the same breath castigates the Hussite heresy:

"Sie hand wol ten als narn und torn,  
gots warter ist an in verlorn;  
si wolten cristenlichen gelauben  
an seinen hohen eren rauben." (253).

The condemnation of the heretics by most of the people shows us how strongly the people were bound to the Medieval Church. Another century of thought and development and then the connections could be severed.

On the whole we may conclude on the basis of the foregoing fairly representative consensus of opinion that the people were heartily disgusted with the corruption and the decline of the ~~papacy~~,  
papacy,



papacy and the hierarchy, that they attacked the abuses within the Church, but not the system and organization of the Medieval Church  
per se.

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- (245) Gobelin, 303, in Theremin, 40.
  - (246) Rufus, 28, 39, in Theremin 23.
  - (247) Limburg, 61; Mainz 221; in Theremin, 23.
  - (248) Closener, 113; Koenigshoven, 737; in Theremin, 10.
  - (249) Theremin, 11.
  - (250) Magdeburg, 204, in Theremin, 11.
  - (251) Detmar, 19, 520, in Theremin, 11.
  - (252) Herford, 280, in Theremin, 11.
  - (253) Lilliencron i, no. 50, 1.1115 ff.



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